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Testimony of Joseph S Przylucki, Vice Chair Griswold Board of Finance

Chairman Roy, Chairman Meyer, Members of the Environment Committee. For the record, my name is Joseph Przylucki, Vice Chairman of the Griswold Board of Finance.

I am here today to testify in support of H.B. No 5417 (raised), An Act Concerning Open Space and the Creation of Trails for All Terrain Vehicles.

First I would like to thank the committee for allowing me the opportunity to submit testimony here today.

I am here today to speak on behalf of a subject of which I have some expertise. I am involved in the sale of ATV's, UTV's, and snowmobiles, as a Connecticut dealer, licensed to sell these products.

My focus today is to clarify the present financial situation that exists today in Connecticut regarding ATV registrations and sales tax. As you may be aware of their presently exists on the books legislation concerning ATV usage in Connecticut. Since the DEP has not created a trail system as mandated, there is no reason for anyone to register an ATV, UTV, in Connecticut, and therefore most owners of these vehicles don't. This represents a loss in revenues to the state in the millions. Also buyers will jump over state lines to purchase these new vehicles and avoid Sales Tax. This represents revenue losses also in the millions. Every time a used ATV/UTV sells privately no one volunteers to pay the required Sales Tax based on the sale amount, several additional millions in lost revenues. State revenue recap, Sales Tax on 100% of ATV/UTV sales within the state, 90% increase in revenues from registrations, Sales Tax paid on all used vehicle transactions, out of state residents who register in Connecticut as well as out of state trail user fees.

As compared to other sources of revenues that Connecticut residents would be required to pay, this revenue stream would be paid willingly. If the DEP creates an attractive trail system in multiple locations across the state riders will be happy to spend the fees required under this bill. A look at the fees derived from hunting, fishing, and boating activities can give a glimpse of the revenue potential of this bill.

It is a proven fact that hunters, fishermen, and boaters work hard to police themselves to protect the environment. As any person that enjoys the outdoors and wants to protect it knows, it takes money to operate these properties and enforce their protection. If you give people the right to use these areas for a fee, you now will have the funds needed to maintain and enforce the usage.

Under the present financial situation that exists in Connecticut, the DEP will most likely see decreases in funding. Under this bill or one similar, it could be expected that the DEP would have higher funding levels, to maintain staff levels or even expand staffing. More bodies mean more coverage throughout the state owned properties.

To be included in my testimony today; OLR Research Report, dated Jan 28, 2010, prepared by Megan Reilly, # 2010-R-0032, OLR Research Report, dated Sept 27, 2002, prepared by James Fazzalaro, # 2002-R-0807, and H.B. No 5078 Introduced by: Rep. Steven T. Mikutel, 45th Dist. And Sen. Andrew M. Maynard, 18th Dist.